

Given a selection, the student correctly interprets the mood.

UNIT 5
Lesson 1
Critical Reading

TECHNICAL TALK

When an author writes he or she tries to tell us something. We get ideas from what we read. Many authors try to change our feelings about something, too. They might try to make us happy or angry or afraid. They create a mood that we react to. We may get the same feelings the author builds in his or her writing. It takes a good writer to create moods in us. When a writer is able to do this, we know that he or she is an artist.

TRY IT

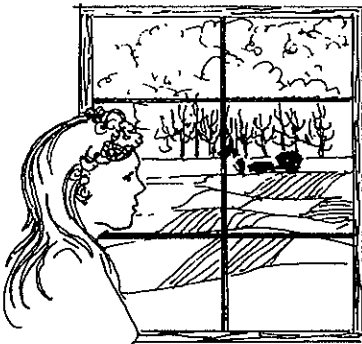
The selection which follows tries to develop one of these moods: loneliness, anger, fear, happiness, hopelessness. Read it and decide which one of these moods the author wants you to feel.

MORNING WINDOW

Andyce looked out the window over the countryside. There seemed to be no sound at all. More than a mile away she could see farmer Tangdow walking beside his oxen and a load of hay, but his wagon made not a sound she could hear. Even the birds were quiet. The sky was a dull gray quilt, spread over the whole earth.

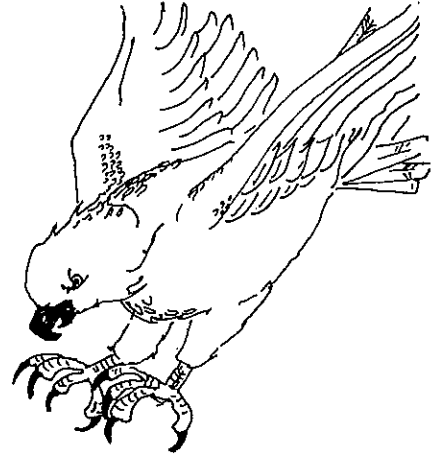
She watched the farmer and his cart. She was affected by the slowness of their movement. She couldn't see the road they moved along, but she measured their snail's pace against the trees they passed. She brushed her hair carefully and slowly as she watched. There seemed to be nothing else moving in the world but the farmer there and her.

What mood is the author trying to create? (a) anger (b) fear (c) loneliness
(d) happiness (e) hopelessness



The mood in the first selection was one of solitude or loneliness. Did you notice the images the author used? Did you try to picture and listen to what the author wrote about? There was no one else about. The sky was overcast. The only contact Andyce had with anyone was with the farmer who was so far away that she was still alone. The author helps us feel how Andyce felt. He has created a mood for us.

What mood do you sense in this next piece?



HAWK

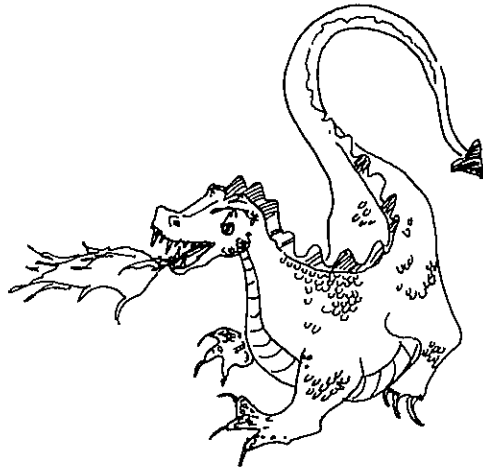
The rabbit had seen the hawk high above, her black wings spread against the sun. The rabbit cocked his head and watched the hawk glide in wide circles. He sensed she was hungry and hunting. He crouched lower in the grass keeping still. He shivered a little as a breeze caught the fur on his side and moved it in little ripples.

Then he saw the hawk twist, fold its wings and begin a long dive straight at him. She put her feet first with those long claws down and pointed. She hurtled down with tremendous speed. The rabbit jumped sideways and took three long leaps, each in a different direction. The hawk's wings moved just a little first this way then that. She kept on target. Like an explosive charge she hit the rabbit. Fur and feathers flew, and blood marked the snowy ground. The hawk preened her feathers once with her razor-sharp bill and settled down to breakfast.

Mark the statement below that best describes the mood of this piece.

- a. ☐ The author wants you to feel afraid for the rabbit.
- b. ☐ The author wants you to see the violence of the kill. He does not feel sorry for the rabbit though.
- c. ☐ The author wants you to be on the hawk's side.

Discuss your answer with others. Explain why you answered the way you did.



DRAGON FIGHT

There are two different moods in the following paragraphs. Read the paragraphs then select the sentence which best describes the mood in each one. Write the letter of the sentence you pick for each paragraph in the box at the beginning of the paragraph.

1. ☐ The dragon thrashed his tail. George could hear the beast's teeth grind and its breath burn the grass. Each time the dragon's tail or foot smashed into the ground the trees rocked. The roar the beast made was like thunder. George could see the soft, pale green belly of the huge animal. That's where the spear must strike. It was only there that the dragon could be killed. George bent over the spear. Its red streamer followed the wind as he leveled the weapon. He spurred his horse and yelled as they thundered down on the monster.

2. ☐ The stream gurgled peacefully under the bridge. Carrie looked deep into the water for one of the long brown trout. She often saw them there swimming sleepily near the rocks in the stream bed. The pine trees whispered in the wind. A bird chirped quietly in a nearby bush, but those were the only sounds. She needed a chance to think. This was the place for it.

- (a) The mood is happy excitement.
- (b) The mood is noisy and dangerous.
- (c) The mood is bitter. The character feels beat, defeated.
- (d) The mood is grey and miserable.
- (e) Peace, solitude, and aloneness describe the mood.

HOW DID YOU DO?

